

We claim:

1. A sanitary napkin for mounting onto the bodyside of a crotch portion of an undergarment and, during use, absorbing bodily excretions, comprising:
 - (a) an elongated absorbent pad having a longitudinal axis, a longitudinally central portion and opposite longitudinal side edges, said side edges being deflectable with respect to said central portion, and including an absorbent contained between a bodyside, liquid-permeable cover and a garment side, liquid-impermeable baffle; and
 - (b) control means for selectively controlling deflection of at least one of said side edges during use.
2. The sanitary napkin of claim 1 wherein said control means comprises a garment attachment panel, normally extending generally downward and inward from said absorbent pad adjacent to at least one of said side edges, and in use, anchorable under said crotch portion of said undergarment so as to confine said crotch portion and substantially define its lateral disposition.
3. The sanitary napkin of claim 2 wherein said undergarment has leg openings and said crotch portion has generally longitudinally oriented side edges defined by said leg openings, and said garment attachment panel includes a fixed portion attached to the underside of said absorbent pad towards said at least one side edge and defining a garment panel attachment and a free portion diverging from the underside of said absorbent pad for, during use, extending under said crotch portion of said undergarment, the lateral disposition of said fixed portion of said garment attachment panel with respect to said absorbent pad defining an outer lateral limit for disposition of said side edge of said crotch portion of said undergarment.
4. The sanitary napkin of claim 3 and further comprising a second garment attachment panel, normally extending generally downward and

inward from said absorbent pad and positioned adjacent to the other side edge of said absorbent pad, and during use, anchorable under said crotch portion of said undergarment, said second garment attachment panel comprising a fixed portion attached to the underside of said absorbent pad towards a second side edge of said absorbent pad and a free portion diverging from the underside of said absorbent pad for, during use, extending under said crotch portion of said undergarment, and including means for anchoring said free portions of said garment attachment panels so as to establish a predetermined deflection of said absorbent side edges and to facilitate accurate mounting of said sanitary napkin on said undergarment.

5. The sanitary napkin of claim 4 wherein said means for anchoring said free portions of said garment attachment panels comprises mating fastener elements, one on each of said garment attachment panels, said fastener elements being configured as to provide substantially only a single predetermined lateral relationship of one garment attachment panel to the other.

6. The sanitary napkin of claim 4 wherein the predetermined deflection of said side edges and the predetermined particular confinement of said side edges of said crotch portion of said undergarment biases said absorbent pad into an upwardly convex form, 5 closely fitting the body.

7. The sanitary napkin of claim 3 wherein said absorbent is longitudinally extending and has opposite longitudinal side edges and the deflectable side edges of the absorbent pad normally extend generally laterally with respect to said absorbent and, during use, 5 the anchoring of said garment attachment panel configures said sanitary napkin so that each side edge of said crotch portion of said undergarment is supported approximately no higher than a side edge of said absorbent.

8. The sanitary napkin of claim 7 wherein the lateral disposition of said fixed portion of said garment attachment panel and the

anchoring of said garment attachment panel configures said sanitary napkin so that each side edge of said crotch portion of said undergarment is supported approximately beneath a side edge of said absorbent and said absorbent is free to conform to the body of the user.

9. The sanitary napkin of claim 7 wherein each side edge of said crotch portion of said undergarment is, in use, under tension and biases each side edge of said absorbent upwards.

10. The sanitary napkin of claim 4 wherein said fixed portion of said garment attachment panels are disposed so that each side edge of said crotch portion of said undergarment is restrained adjacent to a side edge of said absorbent pad and prevented from overlaying said absorbent pad.

11. The sanitary napkin of claim 3 wherein at least one of said side edges of said absorbent pad has a lateral periphery and said absorbent has a longitudinally extending lateral side contiguous with said side edge and said attachment of said garment attachment panel has an inner lateral limit from which said free portion of said garment attachment panel diverges and said inner lateral limit is disposed between said lateral side of said absorbent and said lateral periphery of said side edge of said absorbent pad.

12. The sanitary napkin of claim 11 wherein said inner lateral limit of said panel attachment is disposed towards but spaced apart from said lateral side of said absorbent.

13. The sanitary napkin of claim 11 wherein said baffle extends laterally outwardly to approximately said lateral periphery of said at least one of said side edges and said garment attachment panel is secured to said baffle.

14. The sanitary napkin of claim 1 wherein said cover and said baffle extend laterally beyond said absorbent to define said side

edges and said control means comprises a garment attachment panel which is secured to said baffle outwardly of said absorbent.

15. The sanitary napkin of claim 14 wherein, in at least a portion of said side edges, said cover and said baffle are bonded together to form an edge seal.

16. The sanitary napkin of claim 1 wherein said side edges of said absorbent pad have an outer peripheral edge and are of sufficient width that, during use, at least a portion of each of said side edges may extend beyond an edge of said undergarment crotch portion and

5 extend generally downward and said control means includes a garment attachment panel attached to said garment side of said at least one-side edge at an effective attachment point disposed between its outer peripheral edge and said absorbent, said garment attachment panel being anchorable under said crotch portion to confine said crotch
10 portion and substantially define its lateral disposition.

17. A sanitary napkin for mounting onto the bodyside of a crotch portion of an undergarment and, during use, absorbing bodily excretions, comprising:

5 (a) an elongated absorbent pad having a longitudinal axis, a longitudinally central portion and opposite longitudinal side edges, said side edges being deflectable with respect to said central portion, and including an absorbent contained between a bodyside, liquid-permeable cover and a garment side, liquid-impermeable baffle, at least one of said cover and said baffle extending laterally beyond
10 said absorbent to define said side edges; and

(b) at least one garment attachment panel, carried by one of said opposite side edges and normally extending generally downward and inward and, during use, anchorable under said crotch portion of said undergarment, said anchoring at least potentially establishing a generally downward pull on said side edge and preventing said side edge from folding in towards said absorbent.

18. A sanitary napkin for mounting onto the bodyside of a crotch portion of an undergarment, said crotch portion having opposite lateral side edges and, during use, said sanitary napkin absorbing bodily excretions, comprising:

5 (a) an elongated absorbent pad having a longitudinal axis and a longitudinally central portion and opposite longitudinal side edges, said side edges being deflectable with respect to said central portion, and including an absorbent contained between a bodyside, liquid-permeable cover and a garment side, liquid-impermeable baffle, 10 said longitudinal side edges of said absorbent pad, at least in a longitudinally central portion of their length, being widened laterally to define a pair of first side panels, each panel having a bodyside and a garment side and said panels extending sufficiently beyond said absorbent that, during use, said panels extend beyond and 15 depend below said side edges of said crotch portion; and

(b) a pair of opposite, garment attachment panels secured to said garment side of said absorbent pad for, in use, selectively controlling deflection of said side edges of said absorbent pad.

19. The sanitary napkin of claim 18 wherein said garment attachment panels are anchorable under said crotch portion of said undergarment to confine said crotch portion and substantially define its lateral disposition.

20. The sanitary napkin of claim 19 further including means for anchoring said garment attachment panels to establish a predetermined deflection of said side edges of said absorbent pad and to facilitate accurate mounting of said sanitary napkin on said 5 undergarment.

21. The sanitary napkin of claim 20 wherein said means for anchoring said garment attachment panels comprises mating fastener elements, one on each panel, said elements being configured to provide substantially only a single predetermined lateral 5 relationship of one panel to the other.

22. The sanitary napkin of claim 18 wherein said garment attachment panels are anchorable under said crotch portion of said undergarment and said sanitary napkin is configured so that, in use, said crotch edges are contained, spaced apart, under said absorbent.

23. The sanitary napkin of claim 18 wherein said cover and said baffle are bonded together to form an edge seal and said garment attachment panels are attached to said baffle side of said edge seal.

24. The sanitary napkin of claim 18 wherein each of said first side panels at least partially longitudinally overlays one of said garment attachment panels and each of said first side panels has a greater longitudinal extent than the garment attachment panel which it overlays.

5 25. A sanitary napkin for mounting onto the body side of a crotch portion of an undergarment and, during use, absorbing bodily excretions, comprising:

5 (a) an elongated absorbent pad having a longitudinal axis, a longitudinally central portion and opposite longitudinal side edges, and including an absorbent contained between a bodyside, liquid-permeable cover and a garment side, liquid-impermeable baffle, said cover and baffle cooperating to wrap said absorbent so that said absorbent pad has a generally smooth outer surface and so that said 10 side edges are rounded; and

15 (b) at least one garment attachment panel attached at one of said rounded side edges so that, before the mounting of said sanitary napkin onto said undergarment, said garment attachment panel may extend generally tangentially and downwardly from said rounded side edge.

26. The sanitary napkin of claim 25 wherein said crotch portion of said undergarment includes a pair of opposite, generally longitudinally extending side edges and, during use, said garment attachment panel is anchorable under said crotch portion so as to

5 confine said crotch portion and control the lateral disposition of at least one of said side edges of said crotch portion of said undergarment.

27. The sanitary napkin of claim 26 and further comprising a second garment attachment panel attached at the other of said rounded side edges so that, before the mounting of said sanitary napkin onto said undergarment, said second garment attachment panel may extend

5 generally tangentially and downwardly from said other of said rounded side edges and mating fastener elements, one on each of said garment attachment panels, and wherein said fastener elements and said garment attachment panels are configured so that, during use, said garment attachment panels may be fastened together under said

10 crotch portion of said undergarment and, when fastened, provide only a single predetermined lateral relationship of one garment attachment panel to the other.

28. The sanitary napkin of claim 27 wherein the fastening together of said garment attachment panels biases said absorbent pad into an upwardly convex form.

29. The sanitary napkin of claim 27 wherein, during use, the fastening together of said garment attachment panels controls the lateral disposition of both side edges of said crotch portion of said undergarment and defines opposite outer lateral limits of disposition

5 for said side edges of said crotch portion adjacent each of said rounded side edges of said absorbent pad.

30. A sanitary napkin for mounting onto the bodyside of a crotch portion of an undergarment and, during use, absorbing bodily excretions, comprising:

(a) an elongated absorbent pad having a longitudinal axis, a

5 longitudinally central portion and opposite longitudinal side edges, and including an absorbent contained between a bodyside,

liquid-permeable cover and a garment side, liquid-impermeable baffle, said cover and baffle cooperating to wrap said absorbent so that said absorbent pad has a generally smooth outer surface and so that said side edges are rounded; and

(b) at least one garment attachment panel comprising a sheet of flexible material having contiguous fixed and free portions, said fixed portion being attached to said absorbent pad in such a way that, before the mounting of said sanitary napkin onto said undergarment, said free portion of said garment attachment panel may diverge generally tangentially from the surface of said absorbent pad at an effective point of attachment and in such a direction that reducing the divergence would wrap said garment attachment panel under said absorbent pad.

31. The sanitary napkin of claim 30 wherein said effective point of attachment is laterally alongside one of said rounded side edges.

32. The sanitary napkin of claim 30 wherein said effective point of attachment is at a lower portion of one of said rounded side edges.

33. The sanitary napkin of claim 30 wherein said fixed portion of said garment attachment panel at least partially wraps one of said rounded side edges of said absorbent pad.

34. The sanitary napkin of claim 30 wherein said crotch portion of said undergarment includes a generally longitudinally extending side edge and, during use, said garment attachment panel extends under said crotch portion and the lateral disposition of said effective point of attachment of said garment attachment panel defines an outer lateral limit for disposition of said side edge of said crotch portion.